

OUT OF TIME

Issue No. 52 *Out of Control--Lesbian Committee to Support Women Political Prisoners*

April 2000

Plowshares Activists Sentenced

Susan Crane was one of four people arrested Dec. 19, 1999 for disarming two A-10 Thunderbolt bombers at a national guard facility in Essex, MD. The group, known as PLOW-SHARES VS. DEPLETED URANIUM, hammered on the guns within the planes, poured their blood into the engines, hung their banner and left a very large rosary. They have all been convicted and sentenced to terms from 18 to 30 months.

Susan Crane had been released from federal prison last year. She wrote a letter to her friends before the action in December explaining her reasons for giving up her newly found freedom. The following are excerpts. **You can write to Susan #916999 at Maryland Correctional Institution for Women, PO Box 535, Jessup MD 20794.**

A-10 planes were used against the people of Iraq in the Gulf war and have been used since then to enforce the sanctions. The A-10s shot most of the radioactive depleted uranium (DU) that poisoned and continues to poison the Iraqi land and people in the south of the country...DU cannot be controlled in space or time: its use is a violation of international law...DU munitions [were used] in Kosovo, in Vieques...the research, development, and manufacturing of DU munitions in this country has caused sickness to the workers and to those who live near or downwind of the plants.

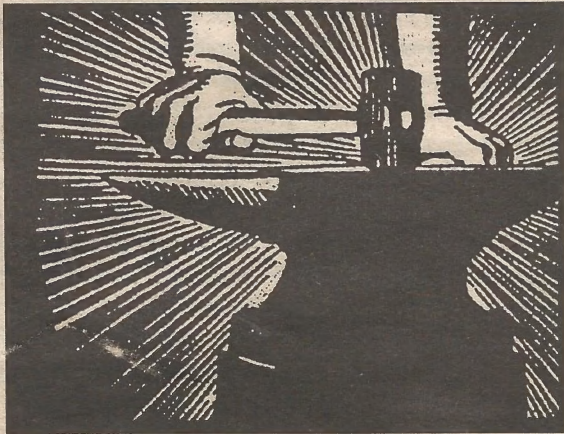
...maybe you're asking: 'Can't you think of something better to do? Are you being effective?'

...I want to talk about my motivation. After all, I was recently released from prison and I struggled with the Baltimore Probation Dept. ...to live at Jonah House. (Thanks for all those letters of support.) I like living at

Jonah House: the work that the community does is important. Helped by sharing the daily readings each morning and participating in a shared reflection, we have a chance to examine our conduct and try to align ourselves with gospel values....I read about the children who have mirasmas[sic] because of the sanctions and cancer because of the depleted uranium and other poisons that result from the war...the weapons get in the way of right relationships

between us and our neighbors, us and the earth and us and our God. And so we form a Plowshares community, keeping ourselves indifferent to our natural likes and dislikes in such matters as health or sickness...between living in jail or out of jail.

For more information write The Nuclear Resister, PO Box 43383, Tuscon, AZ 85733.



CLEMENCY FOR NUH

Albert Nuh(Noah) Washington was an active member of the Black Panther Party and later of the Black Liberation Army. In 1971, he was shot and arrested in California and in 1975, he was convicted together with Herman Bell and Jalil Abdul Muntaquin of the murder of two New York City police officers and sentenced to life in prison.

Several campaigns to overturn the sentences of the "New York Three" have been unsuccessful. They have spent three decades behind prison bars.

In December 1999, Nuh was diagnosed with terminal liver cancer and given ten months to live. Because New York State law prohibits compassionate release for "convicted murderers," he will continue to serve his sentence until he dies.

In March, after an intensive letter writing campaign by friends and family, Nuh was transferred from Great Meadows Correctional Facility to the Regional Medical Unit at Cocksackie. Very clearly, his situation where he is is infinitely better than where he was at Comstock. Nuh greatly appreciates getting mail and the address is: **Albert Nuh Washington #77A1528, Cocksackie Correctional Facility - RMU P.O. Box 999, Cocksackie, NY 12051**

Bob Boyle, a lawyer in New York, is now working on the clemency petition. The priority had been to get Nuh into a setting that was less stressful where he could get better medical care. To win clemency much more needs to be done. **For more info: Jericho Amnesty Movement, P.O. Box 3585, Oakland, CA 94609**

On April 22, the Jericho Amnesty Movement and the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement presented a tribute to Nuh's life and work. All proceeds from this benefit went to Nuh and his family. **Contributions can still be sent. The Victory Gardens Project of the NY3 is offering its fiscal sponsorship to collect funds for Nuh's family. So please make your check out to LSPC/VG, put Nuh in the lefthand corner, and return to the Jericho Amnesty Movement(address above).** For donations of \$15.00, you will receive a copy of Nuh's poetry booklet. For donations over \$25.00, you will receive the poetry booklet and a 4 color poster commemorating this tribute to Nuh.



Nuh Washington

PRISON LEGAL NEWS PARTY

JUSTICE LEAGUE CLUB

May 16 at 8pm, 628 Divisadero Street, San Francisco

PLN was started 10 years ago by Ed Mead and Paul Wright at Monroe Reformatory in Washington. It has grown into one of the biggest and best prisoner newspapers in this country. Paul, still a prisoner, remains editor; with Dan Pens, Daniel Burton-Rose and Christian Perinti working on the outside. It carries national and very current legal information pertaining to prisoners wherever they may be.

Our sisters Linda Evans, Laura Whitehorn, and Marilyn Buck write regular articles; along with Mumia Abu Jamal and other political prisoners and a wide array of jailhouse lawyers from around the country. PLN serves as an important tool for prisoners using the legal systems to fight their individual cases or local issues such as conditions and struggles within each prisons. Without PLN, it could take years for such case information to reach prisoners.

There will be local spoken word artists, The Kine Dancers, some rappers, and GOOD dj's for dancing and clubbing the night away. This **BENEFIT** is sponsored by Prison Activist Resource Center and Out Of Control. All funds will be matched by a long time PLN supporter and will be used to hire another office person on the outside and whatever it takes to keep PLN keeping on the good fight. **For more info: PARC@prisonactivist.org or ph: 510.893.4648**



Out of Time
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3543--18th Street, Box 30
San Francisco, CA 94110
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Message from Rome



August 24, 1999, after 17 years in US federal prisons, Silvia Baraldini was returned to her homeland and an Italian prison in Rome. We will continue to publish words from Silvia to give her a voice and keep her present in our hearts and minds. She appreciates letters and books. **Write: Silvia Baraldini, Via Bartolo Longo 92, 00156 Roma ITALY**

Notes from a Roman Jail: New Year's greetings from my hometown, a city firmly committed to ending the death penalty. Everytime a nation abolishes the death penalty, the colosseum will be lit, one arch at a time, each representing those countries that do not practice this barbaric violence. Last week, Barbados joined the ranks of those who respect human life. It's a relief to live in a country that has a basic respect for human life with all its faults and weaknesses. Peace, Silvia

BOOKS FOR PRISONERS

All the organizations below need and appreciate donations and/or volunteers.

Locked Out is an organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered prisoners. Their main focus is sending free books inside, but they also try to assist prisoners by providing a list of gay and lesbian lawyers, documenting and reporting abuse to appropriate organizations, and functioning as a information source for people in the outside community to learn about the horrors of being queer in prison. **Write to Locked Out c/o Bound Together Books, 1369 Haight St. San Francisco, CA 94117 or call 415-489-7279**

Midwest Books to Prisoners is specifically for the midwestern region. They have recently received a number of great books on women's/gender studies and would like to reach more women prisoners. **Write them at Secret Sailor Books, 202 N. Walnut St, Bloomington IN 47404**

The George Jackson Books to Prisoners Project "...aims to increase the revolutionary dialogue between the working class and the prison population in the U.S. We currently send requested revolutionary books to prisoners and request that they write a critique. We then plan to print their critique in a magazine." **Contact them at PO Box 1285, Roswell GA 30077, www.delphi.com/georgejackson**

Women's Prison Book Project has been sending many different kinds of books to women for 6 years: books on health, dictionaries, children's books, history, science and math texts and fiction. **Write them c/o ARISE Bookstore, 2441 Lyndale Ave. S., Minneapolis MN 55405**

Death Penalty from a Lifer's View

Last month OOT received the following letter from Fran Thompson, a woman serving a life sentence in Nebraska. Fran desires that legislation be passed that would give her and other people serving life sentences the option of lethal injection. Out of Control does not support the death penalty in any form but we think the letter is important because it exposes the depths of despair that exist inside prisons. Prison conditions in the US are horrible. Our intention is not to deny that Fran's situation is a "fate worse than death" or to demean her opinion. But this type of legislation is still state-sponsored death even if it is designed to seem as if it is the prisoner's choice. The system is too full of flaws to trust that this would not be used deviously as well. What would prevent a prisoner from being coerced into choosing death?

There is a nationwide movement to change and/or abolish the US prison system. There are groups, large and small, working in support of prisoners, against the death penalty, against privatization of prisons, and for humane treatment of all prisoners. Letter writing campaigns help prisoners obtain needed medical care, proper food and better conditions. Support committees keep in contact with prisoners so that they know they are not alone, and help raise money for family visits and other needs. Grass roots organizations have been successful in helping prisoners get access to legal assistance in appeals, parole, and release from prison. More work needs to be done.

As the prison population and prison construction increases, the movement against it also grows. Fran asks is there anyone out there that feels like she does. We don't want Fran to die. We ask, is there anyone out there who can help Fran get better treatment for her diabetes, give her legal help toward an appeal, or form a small committee to visit her. If you are a prisoner please do not write Fran directly, she will not be given your letter.

Hi, People!

I've just read Marilyn Buck in your 2/2000 Out of Time, and am inspired to respond to her statement, "There are even prisoners who support the death penalty (though not for themselves I'm sure)."

Wrong.

Me, ME! I want the death penalty!

I am a falsely imprisoned eco/animal activist, with a Life Sentence on a wrongful Murder 1 charge. (I haven't murdered anyone.)

I have been in this Nebraska prison for almost 8 years, and I can say in perfect truth, with full personal knowledge, that being in this prison is a fate worse than death. Much worse.

I'd like to ask your readers if any have heard of this issue in their states: In December of 1998, an article appeared in a Neb. newspaper declaring that a bill would come up...that would give "lifers" the option of lethal injection to shorten their sentences. Wow! Fer neat! I couldn't wait to sign up!

(This prison has given me stress-induced insulin-dependent diabetes [2 shots a day]; at the same time they refuse to provide vegan food to me, so I don't get enough food to balance the whopping injections of insulin. Then, if I collapse...and fail to show up on time...I get a Misconduct Report for being late.)

I cannot tolerate this evil that surrounds me in the form of scumbag "state employees." They do many things to me...I do crave a death sentence...

I quickly wrote to the Clerk of the Neb. legislature...She responded that...no such bill existed.

Early '99, on tv...I heard the same option for lifers discussed on a national level! ...I have not heard a peep on the issue since! Yet I do not forget the possibility of relief from this undeserved pain, fear, and frustration.

...There must be other women in similar situations who feel the same as I, and I'd like to know that...

Sincerely, **Fran Thompson, 1107 Recharge Rd., York NE 68467**

A Few Prison Activist Organizations

Political Prisoners of War Coalition (PPWC) was created by prisoners and non prisoners. It supports all prisoners by sharing information, exposing all forms of oppression and developing a networking system among prisoners to change their conditions. They publish a newsletter, PPWC Update, and pamphlets and zines written by prisoners. There is a catalog of past publications available. **Write to PPWC Information Center, c/o Cynthia Ritsher, PO Box 554, Lincoln MA 01773 or South Chicago ABC Zine Distribution, PO Box 721, Homewood IL 60430**

The Coalition for the Abolition of Prisons, Inc. puts out a newsletter. In their words, "We have begun to plant the seeds of restoring and reviving the abolitionist movement. Organizing an abolitionist movement is a complicated and arduous task that requires a Revolutionary perspective of prisons and a stronger basis of Solidarity than Strategy alone." **Write them at PO Box 201, Quakertown, PA 18951**

Prison Activist Resource Center (PARC) sends info packets to prisoners and their families, creates and distributes anti-prison organizing guides, hosts a radio show, does education, maintains a prison issues website and works in coalitions. **For info, PO Box 339, Berkeley CA 94701, www.prisonactivist.org**

California Coalition for Women Prisoners (CCWP) promotes the leadership of and gives voice to women prisoners and former prisoners. They work to raise public consciousness about the cruel and inhumane conditions inside prisons and advocate positive changes. They invite women who have been or who are inside to send them writings, letters or art work. **Their newsletter is called The Fire Inside. For info, 100 McAllister St. San Francisco CA 94102**

OUT OF TIME

Assata Still in Danger

excerpted from an 'Open Letter: Black Feminists Support the Hands Off Assata Campaign'. printed in *Sojourner: A Women's Forum*, March, 2000.

The case of Assata Shakur is yet another unjust persecution of a Black woman activist and freedom fighter. Assata Shakur was one of a number of political activists railroaded by the FBI's Cointelpro program in the 1970s. Through the Freedom of Information Act, evidence has been revealed that the government carried out a systematic campaign to undermine and destroy the Black Liberation Movement during the 1960s and '70s. The Black Panther Party and Black Liberation Army of which Sister Assata was a leading member, were principal targets. It is not difficult to believe that she was framed for the murder of a New Jersey state trooper in 1973 as she contends...

The federal authorities caged Assata's body for six years, from 1973 to 1979, but they could not cage her spirit. Ultimately, they could not contain her body either. She escaped prison in 1979 and has lived in exile in Cuba since 1986.

Since her exile, Assata Shakur has continued to speak out and support progressive and radical causes. She has been especially compelling in her message about gender politics...

There is a campaign underway at this moment to extradite Assata Shakur to the United States and to re-imprison her. It is a campaign led by New Jersey's Republican Governor Christine Todd Whitman and some of the same forces that have led the charge against poor Black women and their children in this country. From welfare eradication, to the criminalization of poor Black and Latino youth, to the growing incarceration rate among Black women, we have borne the brunt of the right wing onslaught of the 1980s and '90s. The mainstream media has either been silent or has openly collaborated in the war against poor Black women at home; similarly they have contributed to the unjust campaign against Assata Shakur...

Hands Off Assata is a broad and growing coalition. The Steering Committee in Formation consists of representatives from the Black Radical Congress, the National Congress of Black Lawyers, Global Exchange, the Malcolm X Grassroots Organization, Pastors for Peace, Jericho and many individual activists.

There are many things we can do. **For more information contact the Hands Off Assata Campaign, PO Box 438731, Chicago IL 60643 or the AfroCuba website, www.afrocubaweb.com**

Urgent call to action for Lori Berenson

Lori Berenson is a U.S. citizen, human rights activist, and free-lance journalist who currently is serving a life sentence in Peru following her conviction in 1995 by a secret, hooded military tribunal, in violation of international law.

This is the last chance for Congress to pressure President Clinton to fulfill his obligation to Lori. "Dear Colleague Letters" to President Clinton are now circulating in both the House and the Senate urging him to secure Lori's release. Help is needed to get senators and representatives to sign on to these letters.

Please write to your senators and your representative. Call (or follow up your letters with phone calls to) your senators and representatives in Washington at 202-225-3121 to urge them



to sign on to the circulating "Dear Colleague Letter." Ask to speak to the Legislative Assistant for Foreign Relations. Indicate that you are a constituent and that you want to urge your elected official to sign the "Dear Colleague Letter" to President Clinton to secure the release of Lori Berenson. When speaking with a senate office, mention the "Dear Colleague Letter" from Senator Moynihan. When speaking with a house office, mention the "Dear Colleague Letter" from Representative Maloney.

Use the sample letters at www.freelori.org (Access the U.S. Government Actions dialogue box and click on Sample Letters for the Senate and the House) or write your own. **You can also write the Committee to Free Lori Berenson at 110 Maryland Ave NE #102, Washington DC 20002.**

'Day-After' Emergency Rally! Resist the Navy's Bombing of Vieques, Puerto Rico

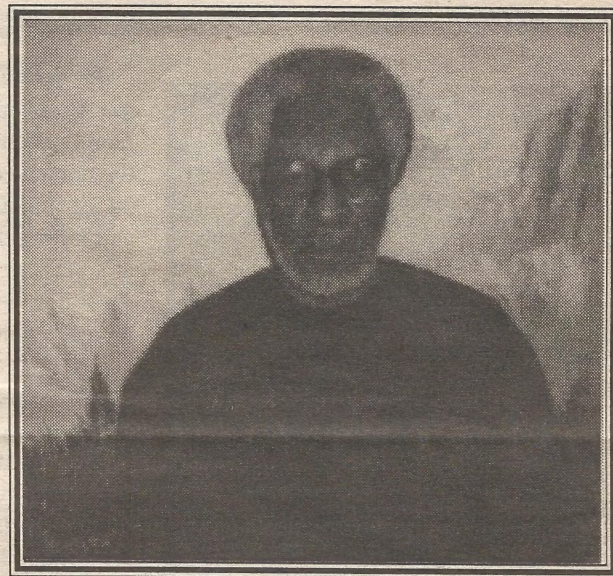
Vieques is a populated island on the eastern coast of Puerto Rico used since 1941 by the US Navy and NATO forces to train for war. More bombs have been dropped on Vieques than on Iraq or Kosovo, and the people of Vieques suffer disproportionately from unemployment, cancer, and other ailments. The people of Vieques and Puerto Rico are united in wanting the Navy out. Since last April, civil disobedience camps in the bomb testing area of Vieques and political support in Puerto Rico and the U.S. have prevented the Navy from resuming bombing.

The Navy is expected to start bombing Vieques in May, and arrests of people in civil disobedience camps in

Vieques may occur at any time.

In case of arrests in Vieques, or a resumption of bombing there, we invite you to **Rally in San Francisco at Justin Hermann Plaza (Near Embarcadero BART) 4:00 p.m. the weekday after bombing. For more information, call: 415-495-6334, 415-550-0893, or 510-389-5660. Website: <http://www.viequeslibre.org>**

Call the white house comment line and urge president clinton TO END THE BOMBING OF VIEQUES: 202-456-1111 or white house advisor, Jeffrey Farrow: 202-456-5179



MARK COOK IS FREE

AT LAST after doing 24 years in various cells thru-out the prison industrial complex Mark was finally paroled on April 4, 2000. He is living with his sister in a capitol hill neighborhood. We hear he's enjoying real food and trying to understand how to adjust to the current cost of everything (there has been at least a 750% increase in the last 24 yrs!). Mark, a former Black Panther, was the last member of the George Jackson Brigade being held. The GJB was an underground group of revolutionaries that disturbed the peace of the ruling class in the Seattle area in the mid 70's by blowing up a few things and robbing a few banks in support of local, national, and international struggles of the times. The Brigade always kept prisoners and their fight in the heart of the work, and several former members continue to work in the current prison movement.

There is a Mark Cook Reentry fund; cuz it aint easy to do all that adjusting without monetary assistance. If you wish to contribute, make checks out to Mark Cook, and send to PO Box 31574, SF, CA 94131.

San Francisco March for Mumia

The case of celebrated Radio Commentator, Journalist and National Writers Union (UAW) member Mumia Abu-Jamal stands at a pivotal point in the fight for justice in this country and around the world. In May, as a part of the federal review, Judge Yohn is expected to make a critical decision. He will decide whether the suppressed evidence that exposes the lie that Mumia received a fair trial in Pennsylvania can be introduced into the official court record.

**STOP THE EXECUTION,
NEW TRIAL FOR MUMIA.**

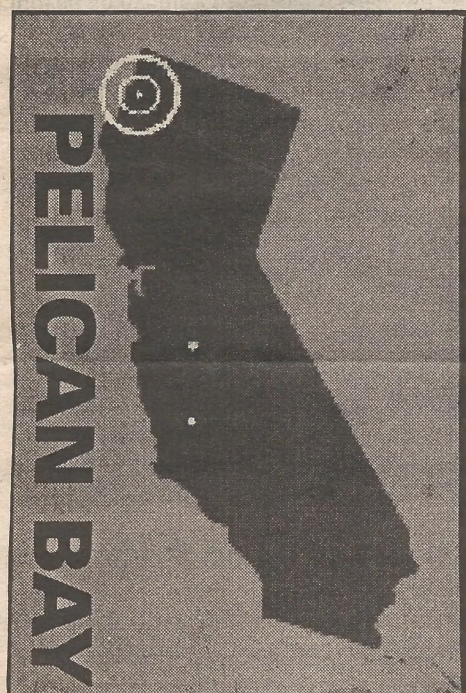
MAY 13, Saturday

**Assemble 11 AM-Justin Herman
Plaza, Market & Embarcadero**

Rally 1 PM-Civic Center

What We Know, What We Say

excerpted from article by Leslie DiBenedetto, winter issue, Prison Focus



On Wednesday, February 23 a fight between rival racial groups broke out on general population B yard at Pelican Bay State Prison. The B facility is one of two 1,200 cell level IV maximum security units next to the notorious Security Housing Unit (SHU). When all was said and done 24 assault-rifle shots were fired by corrections staff, injuring 15 prisoners and killing one. From the information we have, it seems shots were fired at a mass of prisoners within or emerging from the smoke of the tear gas—not at prisoners inflicting great injury or death on another (which is the only time lethal force is permitted).

Our analysis of the incident is as follows:

- (1) A melee of this magnitude demonstrates a failure of penal management in insuring a safe environment for prisoners and staff.
- (2) We criticize the necessity for and use of lethal force on prisoners. From reports, the majority of the prisoners sent to outside hospitals were shooting victims; few were prisoners injured by other prisoners.
- (3) Placing prisoners with hostilities together on the same yard is a regular practice. Fighting results—this is a historical phenomenon—and is perpetuated by prison staff and officials. Prisoners regularly report to us the hostile state of all maximum-security general population yards (i.e. High Desert, Salinas Valley, New Folsom, Calipatria
- (4) Setting up of prisoners continues to occur. We believe if 89 weapons were indeed found on the yard after the incident, that staff allowed this to

occur. Placing known rivals on the same yard, “accidental” cell popping (when two cells are open at the same time), putting a prisoner in a cell with a known assaulter and setting up alleged sex offenders for attack are not uncommon. Legal action and newspaper exposes a few years ago described the years of trouble and lethal guard gunfire at Corcoran. Recently, guards were convicted of setting up fights at Pelican Bay. But the problems persist.

Though CPF denounces the prison system as it currently exists, we suggest the following to improve conditions prisoners live under:

- (1) Create an independent oversight committee with significant community and human rights representation that has the power to examine the overall management of the prison system, to investigate individual claims and has instant random access to all facilities.
- (2) Create a conflict-resolution program between prisoners that includes desegregating so-called gang leaders. Instead of fanning the flames of rivalries (which would take a real overhaul of attitude and policy), work toward peace.
- (3) Designate prisons that are “conflict free” where prisoners not in the mix can stay out of it rather than be forced in.
- (4) Initiate meaningful programming that gives prisoners something constructive to do with their days. One prisoner recently wrote “I don’t know the motives or politics behind the incident but I would attribute it, at least in part, to the lack of positive programs, family visits or job opportunities.... Prisoners are left to stew in whatever negative states of mind and behavior they have with no form of release, guidance, reform or counsel.”
- (5) Constant lockdowns (where prisoners have little time out of cell, no canteen, little access to the law library, no phone calls, visits behind glass and no programming) are not the solution. Lockdowns were used as an alternative to lethal force according to the state investigative panel that reviewed the 24 fatal and serious shootings at Corcoran. Also, for the last year mainline prisoners report not knowing whether they’d get yard time or canteen even when off lockdown.
- (6) Provide adequate medical and mental health care.
- (7) Train staff in conflict resolution and break down the “us v. them” mentality—beginning at the training academy.
- (8) Change California’s draconian sentencing structure: a large number of prisoners on Pelican Bay’s mainline are doing long mandatory sentences with only 10-15% credit limits thus increasing prisoner hopelessness.
- (9) Initiate prisoner transfers closer to home. The majority of our prison population comes from the southern portion of the state. Pelican Bay is a 14-hour drive from Los Angeles.

In all, CPF demands an independent investigation of this incident and the entire prison. We also call for the closing of Pelican Bay due to its consistent brutal and negligent treatment of prisoners.

For more info please contact: California Prison Focus, 2940 16th St, Room 307, San Francisco, CA 94103

SPARKS FLEW

December 11, 1999 our 10th annual cultural/educational benefit for women political prisoners took place at the Mission Cultural Center. Several hundred women attended, showing support for the women prisoners, spirits were high, we raised close to \$1200 dollars and enjoyed an evening of music, poetry and spoken word.

This year was special because we were also celebrating the release of the 11 Puerto Rican Nationalists, the release of Laura Whitehorn, and the return of Silvia Baraldini to Italy!!! Video clips documenting these historic events was

shown. Thank you to the makers: Lisa and Edy.

A heartfelt thank you to those talented artists who generously donated their time: Chrystos, Andrea and Eve of Rebecca Riots, Saayadina, Aya de Leon, and Leah Weinstein.

There is, unfortunately, still a need for a Commissary Fund for women political prisoners. Next year Sparks will fly again November 4, 2000 at the newly remodeled Women’s Building in San Francisco. We will have more information as the time approaches.

UPDATE ON LEONARD’S CONDITION

In April Leonard was given an operation on his locked jaw, at the Mayo Clinic, as he had been requesting for 4 years. He was returned to Leavenworth April 12th and says one side of his jaw still hurts but he can now chew. It will be 6 weeks before a real assessment of the success of the operation can be made. In the meantime, many letters are needed in support of parole for Leonard Peltier.

PAROLE HEARING FOR LEONARD PELTIER JUNE 12

**CALL THE WHITE HOUSE: 202-456-1111
EVERY THURSDAY**

Ask President Clinton to voice his support for Leonard Peltier to the Parole Board and request that they release him, or grant executive clemency. Tell the President that if Leonard Peltier is not released from prison this year, you will be discouraged from voting for Vice President Gore in the upcoming election. **NO JUSTICE, NO VOTE!**

Point: There is disturbing evidence of FBI misconduct in this case; that falsified affidavits were used to extradite Leonard from Canada; that ballistics tests were falsified and young witnesses severely intimidated. Even the U.S. Attorney has admitted that no one knows who pulled the trigger on June 26, 1975.

Point: Leonard has been a model prisoner for over 24 years, with no record of violence, and has contributed to many humanitarian efforts from prison. He has become a master painter.

CALL CONGRESS:

Call 202-224-3121. Call your Congressperson and educate them about this case. Ask to speak to the Legislative Aid in charge of Civil Rights issues in the U.S. Tell them that you want urgent action taken on behalf of Leonard Peltier and ask that support from their office be given for clemency and for parole.

CALL THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT:

Call 202-305-1400. Ask that Janet Reno investigate FBI misconduct in this case, and most importantly, that she support Leonard’s petition for clemency and for parole. Ask that she call the Parole Commission and express her full support for Mr. Peltier.

WRITE LETTERS IN SUPPORT OF PAROLE:

Please send your personal letters, and letters from organizations on official letterhead, to the LPDC in Kansas, so that they can be compiled for presentation at the parole board hearing. Write a simple letter, covering the basic points important for parole board decisions. Number one goal is to get Leonard OUT NOW.

Leonard Peltier Defense Committee
PO Box 583, Lawrence, KS 66044
www.freepeltier.org

Bay Area Support Group
betsy@globalexchange.org or 415-648-8472